

**WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL'S POLICY  
for  
DOMESTIC WASTE WATER TREATMENT  
SYSTEMS  
for  
(Population Equivalent  $\leq$  10)**

The "Code of Practice Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent  $\leq$  10) EPA 2021" offers advice on the construction & installation and the operation & maintenance of wastewater treatment & disposal systems in Chapters 11 & 12. The supplier of the wastewater treatment & disposal system should also provide advice on such matters.

The applicant for/owner of a single house is responsible for the correct installation and proper on-going maintenance of a permitted wastewater treatment and disposal system for a single house. The Planning Authority in granting such developments does so in the knowledge of the applicant's/owner's responsibilities in this regard. Under the Water Services Act 2007 (as amended) it is an offence to cause pollution of surface water and/or groundwater due to the malfunctioning of a wastewater treatment & disposal system.

Planning applications for single houses with on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems shall be assessed in accordance with the "**Code of Practice Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent  $\leq$  10) EPA 2021**" (hereafter referred to as the Code of Practice EPA 2021) and the additional requirements as follows:

1. The minimum site size shall generally be 1500m<sup>2</sup> where the dwelling is connected to a mains water supply.
2. The minimum site size shall generally be 2000m<sup>2</sup> where the dwelling is served by an on-site water supply/well.
3. In areas subject to excessive numbers of dwellings served by wastewater treatment & disposal systems there is a likelihood the Planning Authority will seek to limit in the future the number of such systems in such localities to ensure that there is not a build up of contaminants such as nitrates in the water supply. Accordingly the minimum site size requirements in such areas may exceed the site sizes identified in 1 and 2 above to ensure the safety of water supplies.
4. In assessing and designing wastewater treatment & disposal systems regard shall be had to the current "Wicklow Groundwater Protection Scheme".
5. Wastewater treatment & disposal systems shall generally be located completely within the site and percolation areas & polishing filters shall not be located more than 100m from the dwelling.
6. **Discharge of treated effluent to watercourses will not be allowed** other than where the proposed wastewater treatment system is required for an existing dwelling with no or inadequate wastewater treatment facilities. Any discharge to a watercourse will be subject to the granting of a Water Pollution Act Discharge Licence.
7. (a) The minimum separation distance of septic tanks, secondary treatment plants, percolation areas & polishing filters from the Vartry and Blessington Reservoirs (or any other reservoir designated by the Council) shall be 200m.  
  
(b) The minimum separation distance of septic tanks, secondary treatment plants, percolation areas & polishing filters from streams/watercourses leading to the Vartry and Blessington Reservoirs (or any other reservoir designated by the Council) shall be 100m.
8. No wastewater treatment system shall be allowed to be located within the exclusion zone of a public water supply.
9. In accordance with Table 3.2 of the Code of Practice EPA2021, the number of bedrooms detailed on the submitted plans shall be used for calculating the design population for standard dwellings. In this regard a standard dwelling is taken to be a dwelling with one livingroom, one kitchen, one sitting room, one utility room, and a number of bedrooms. Any additional rooms delineated on the submitted plans (other than bathrooms) will be taken as bedrooms for the calculation of the design population. For avoidance of doubt this will include areas defined as storage but suitable for conversion, libraries, studies, offices, etc.

10. All applications shall be accompanied by a fully completed Site Characterisation Form as per Appendix A of the Code of Practice 2021, including colour photographs, site plans, finished floor levels, ground levels, cross sections, longitudinal sections, and design details relevant to the proposed wastewater treatment & disposal system. The qualifications of the person carrying out the assessment including their professional indemnity insurance should be submitted. These documents shall be site specific and shall not be photocopies from the Code of Practice EPA 2021.

In certain circumstances, as detailed in the Code of Practice EPA 2021, site improvement works can be carried out to render a site suitable for an on-site wastewater treatment system. Where site improvement works are carried out full details of these works shall be submitted with the planning application for the single house development.

Not all sites are suitable for effluent disposal or can be made suitable by carrying out site improvement works. The Planning Authority may deem certain sites unsuitable (e.g. sites prone to flooding) in addition to those specified in the Code of Practice EPA 2021.

11. Intermittent Sand Filter Systems and Sand Polishing Filters will only be permitted if the applicant can demonstrate that they can employ a Contractor who has competency in sourcing the sand to the requirements of Section 8.1.2 & Table 8.2 of Code of Practice EPA 2021 and has specialist experience in constructing such filters.
12. Any applications for filters shall include design details of :
- i) the manifold and lateral drain system (including details of where such materials can be sourced).
  - ii) the pump & pumping chamber.
13. The sides of mounds must be lined with an impermeable membrane from the top of the mound to 300mm below existing ground level.
14. For planning applications for extensions to a dwelling with an existing wastewater treatment system the Council will generally require the wastewater treatment system to be upgraded to comply with the Code of Practice EPA 2021 in each of the following individual circumstances:
- i. The proposed Gross Floor Area of the extension is in excess of 33% of the GFA of the existing dwelling.
  - ii. The number of bedrooms is being increased by > 50%.
  - iii. The existing dwelling is semi-derelict.
  - iv. The existing wastewater treatment system at the date of application would not comply with the previous codes of practice NSAI SR6 1991 or Wastewater Treatment Manuals Treatment Systems for Single Houses EPA2000.

Where circumstances (i) to (iv) above do not apply the Planning Authority may still require the upgrading of wastewater treatment systems in particular circumstances in the interests of public health.

The upgrading of a system prior to or during the course of an application for an extension to an existing dwelling to meet the provisions of SR6 : 1991 or the EPA Manual 2000 or the EPA Manual 2009 is unacceptable and only upgrading to the current standards will be permissible.

**NOTE:**

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- Where the population equivalent (p.e.) is  $> 10$  the Planning Authority will generally require on site wastewater treatment and disposal systems to be assessed and designed in accordance with the Code of Practice “Wastewater Treatment Manuals Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres & Hotels EPA 1999”. References in this code to the “Wastewater Treatment Manuals Treatment Systems for Single Houses EPA 2000” shall be taken as a reference to the “Code of Practice Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent  $\leq 10$ ) EPA 2021”. The Planning Authority will require additional testing in addition to that required in these codes where considered necessary.